

*Vancouver
Women's
Health
Collective*



*Annual Report
2002/2003*

Vancouver Women's Health Collective

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Our Purpose

We have all been taught that only medical experts know about good health care. In fact, health information has been passed down from one generation of women to the next for centuries. Since our founding in 1972, the Vancouver Women's Health Collective (VWHC) has promoted and supported women helping women help themselves.

Our Mission Statement

The Vancouver Women's Health Collective provides information, resources and other support for women to empower themselves to take charge of their own health care.

Our Members

We are a charitable, non-profit women's organization, funded primarily by donations, membership fees, grants, and fundraising initiatives. Volunteer members are an essential part of the VWHC — without them we could not offer our services to the women of British Columbia.

VWHC Goals

- provide a broad range of health-related resources and a critical analysis of the established health care system, thereby offering options by which women can make their own health care decisions
- continue to develop our understanding of health and healing through the critique of the "disease model" of health, and promote a model based on the mind/body/spirit that addresses women-identified health problems
- actively respond to, and expose, the ways that the health care system perpetuates violence against women
- value and promote knowledge about health, based on women's tradition and experience
- create an active and representative women's health lobby to foster change in the health care system by exposing the roots of economic corruption and power imbalances in the established health care industry
- promote the vision that women are more than the sum of their reproductive parts
- support every woman's right to continue or terminate a pregnancy
- engage in education and consciousness-raising around issues of reproductive choice
- inspire, support the development of, and engage in an ongoing exchange with issue-specific self-help, support and educational groups which, although functioning independently of the collective, share our philosophy and values
- actively participate in information exchange and support with individuals and groups locally and globally who share our perspective
- strive to be a self-sufficient organization which remains autonomous and not compromised by funding sources

- actively work on racism, ageism, heterosexism, classism, and discrimination against people with disabilities, within and outside the collective
- create an environment that increases participation in, and use of, the collective, and ensure that both reflect the diversity of our society
- work in a healthy way on issues of power and conflict within the collective
- support and actively practise taking care of ourselves within the collective

Source: WWHC Policy Manual, September 2002

Thanks to our 2002/2003 Funders

Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services (formerly the Ministry of Women's Equality) – Funding ends March 31, 2004

Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (formerly the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board) – Funding ended June 30, 2002

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Gaming Policy

Summer Career Placement Program, HRDC

Partners in Organizational Development - United Way of the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Foundation, City of Vancouver

WWHC Members and Donors

VWHC Members and Donors

April 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003

Olivia Aynsley • Karen Barber • Irene Barr
Barbara Barta • Cora Beitel • Sarah Belanger
Elizabeth Bennett • Margi Blamey • Anita Braha
BC Teachers' Federation • BC Voice of Women
Debora Broadhurst • Judith Burke • Elizabeth Burrell
Diane Burton • Aidan Cameron • Evelyn Capps
C.E.P. – Local 465 • Judy Chrysler
Arlene Churchill-Rubin • Gail Clement
Sharon Coates • Mary Ann Code • Barbara Cohen
Melanie Conn • Sharon Costello
Cranbrook Women's Resource Centre
Celine Cressman • C.U.P.E. – B.C. • Naznin Dawoodi
Jocelyne Dodier • Marina Dorst • Caren Durante
Rachel Dykerman • Ingrid Ferguson • Pam Fichtner
Kathryn Fowles • Rebecca Frame • Ellen Goodall
Alexandra Hansen • Lucette Hansen • Muriel Harris
Jody Hawley • Health Sciences Association of B.C.
Terrie Hendrickson • L' Hirondelle Financial Services
Darby Honeyman • Tannis Hugill • Kate Hunc
I.L.W.U. Women's Committee • Meredith Kimball
Nancy Kleiber • Brenda Knight • Anita Komonski
Ima Krayenhoff • Carol Latter • Margaret Leitner
Barbara Little • Monica Loewi • Allison Louie
Veronica MacIntyre • Charlotte McGowan
L. Whitney McMillan • Mary Anne McWaters
Faiza Majeed • Fainne Martin • Memorial University of
Newfoundland • Sara Menzel
Deborah Messenberg • Rhodea Omler • Open Living
Unit, Burnaby Correctional Centre for Women
Pacific Post Partum Support Society • Rachel Pan
Janet Parkes • Sue Penfold • Penticton & Area
Women's Centre • joannaA Peto • Trisha Phillips
Maureen Picone • Candace Plattor • Jerilynn Prior
Pro-Choice Action Network • R.C.M.P. E Division
Headquarters Training • Janet Riehm • Joan Robillard
Sunita Romeder • Adrienne Ross • Frances Ross
Bettina Rothe • Winona Rowat • Jane Rule
Danielle Savasta • Eng Sengsavang • Rolly Sidher
SFU Women's Centre • Kelli Smith • Kaleigh Starritt
Frances Suski • Diane Trovato • Laurie Verchomin
Kim Versfeld • Christine Wang • Linda Ward
Susan Wendell • Caryn Westmacott • Barb Weston
E. M. Wheeler • Anne-Marie Whittaker
Cady Williams • Women in Print • Women's Contact
Society • Yukon Status of Women's Council

2002/2003

Steering Committee Members

Lucette Hansen, President

Kelli Smith, Vice-president
(resigned February 2003)

Terrie Hendrickson, Treasurer

Anita Komonski, Secretary
(resigned May 2003)

Anne-Marie Whittaker, Member-at-large

Olivia Aynsley, Member-at-large
(resigned January 2003)

Employees

Anna-Lisa Boye, Information Centre Coordinator
(April-May)

Cindy Weeds, Information Centre Coordinator
(June - March)

Caryn Duncan, Administrator

CHA Employee

Angela Gray, Community Health Advocate Coordinator
(April - May)

Summer Student

Eng Sengsavang

Year In Review

April 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003

Throughout 2002/2003, the Vancouver Women's Health Collective continued to provide health information for women through our health information line, VWHC web site, health resource library, and our newsletter, *HER VOICE*.

The collective responded to at least 1,500 women's queries by telephone, e-mail, and by assisting women who visited the Information Centre. As well, women's organizations, community groups, health practitioners, and individual women held meetings, training sessions, and support groups among other events at the Information Centre. The VWHC was also involved as an organizer and presenter at the Raging Women Against the Cuts conference held in late-February, which drew 200 women from across the province.

As a member of the steering committee of the BC Health Coalition, the VWHC participated in a number of health care-related events throughout the year. The BCHC raised vigorous opposition to the numerous cuts to health care services and programs across the province. As well, the BCHC and the Women's Working Group of the BCHC continue to highlight the effects of these cuts on women and to object to the loss of health care jobs, 90% of which are held by women. A joint initiative of the BCHC and the VWHC was a fact sheet produced this year - *Impacting Women: Provincial Cuts to Health Care* - which takes a gendered lens to the issue.

Due to Vancouver Coastal Health Authority cutbacks the VWHC's Community Health Advocate project (Patient's Rights Workshop) ended June 2002. Women's and community organizations that co-hosted the Patient's Rights workshop for women in their community were sad to see this worthwhile community resource come to an end.

In April 2004, we along with all other women's centres in the province will have our provincial grant cut. This \$47,000 grant has enabled the VWHC to pay their only two employees who both work part-time. Throughout this year, a great deal of time and energy has gone into investigating alternative sources of funding. The collective will have to make some difficult decisions about staffing, the affordability of our present location, and other day-to-day expenses in 2004. In order to get us there, we are presently engaged in strategic planning.

The many changes to health care in the province, along with the increased demand for our services, as other community organizations are forced to close, and the collective's funding challenges will keep us busier than ever in the coming year.

Health Information Centre

As usual, it was a busy year at the Information Centre. We continue to strive to make our Information Centre a vital and exciting place to visit and with which to be involved. Staffed predominantly by volunteers, in 2002/2003 the Information Centre was open 20 hours per week, which translates into more than one thousand volunteer hours. Again this year, we welcomed new volunteers and wished others farewell.

The VWHC maintained its presence in the community by attending various events and workshops throughout the Lower Mainland. As well, this year a number of changes were made to the way we deliver our Information Centre services:

- the VWHC health files were refined and now concentrate on health-related topics of particular concern to women
- we expanded our directory to include questionnaires and evaluation forms for midwives and doulas

- we reworked our directory to make it easier for women to access information about health practitioners
- our resource library book collection was culled to make our collection more current and relevant to women
- a new communications tool was developed, the VWHC Titbits fact sheet; our first Titbits is entitled *How to Find a GP*
- the VWHC hosted a Menstrual Health and Fertility Awareness workshop in February and a Breast Health workshop in March
- we made a number of changes to our web site
- a VWHC information folder was developed; women who visit the Information Centre are given the folder to inform them about our services and recent health initiatives
- a monthly Information Centre Report was developed to assist in tracking the number of women who use our services, the information requested by women and the community outreach of volunteers and staff
- our volunteer intake process was revised including designing new interview questions, volunteer forms, and information about the VWHC for prospective volunteers
- the VWHC also hosted a practicum student from UBC's women's studies program

Through the initiative, commitment and hard work of volunteers and staff, the VWHC Information Centre will continue to promote informed, women-centred, self-determined health care for the women of British Columbia.

HER VOICE Newsletter

HER VOICE, the Vancouver Women's Health Collective newsletter, provides a forum to connect the collective with its members and donors, and the community at-large around women's health issues and activities taking place at the collective. The Fall 2002 issue of HER VOICE featured senior women and how the cuts to health care are affecting them as well as the VWHC resources available to "women growing older". The Spring 2003 issue of HER VOICE featured an article about a United Nations report on Canada and its non-compliance with the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The UN was critical of Canadian cuts to women's programs and services and singled out BC for special criticism.

Community Health Advocate Project

The Vancouver Coastal Health Authority cut the funding for the CHA project's Patient's Rights workshop effective June 30, 2002. Four Patient's Rights workshops were hosted by the following organizations in May:

- Leads Group IV, Pacific Immigration Resource Society
- Inform' Elles Reseau-Femmes Columbie Britannique
- Mount Pleasant Family Place
- Crossroads Community Reach

The VWHC is no longer able to offer women the Patient's Rights workshop.

Statement of Revenue and Expenses

for the year ended March 31, 2003, Unaudited
(with comparative figures for 2002)

REVENUE	2003	2002
Grants	66,795	90,682
Gaming	43,125	43,882
Donations	4,063	4,792
Information Services	109	120
Membership fees	960	985
Office Services	2,161	2,627
Other	1,334	659
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	118,547	143,748
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EXPENSES		
Accounting & bookkeeping	2,130	2,611
Advertising & promotion	1,096	1,933
Amortization & depreciation	2,405	1,439
Conference fees & training	616	465
Equipment rent & service	2,118	9,010
GST expense	1,075	1,606
Insurance	677	560
Materials & office supplies	3,485	4,413
Miscellaneous	860	1,099
Postage expenses	1,805	1,357
Printing & production	1,680	1,489
Rent & utilities	20,919	20,767
Resource materials	703	638
Salaries & benefits	75,999	92,085
Special project costs	0	1,983
Telephone & fax	2,466	2,334
Translation	0	1,347
Travel	102	91
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	118,136	145,227
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Surplus/Deficit for the year	411	(1,479)
Gain (loss) on disposition of assets	0	0
Surplus, beginning of year	30,841	32,320
Surplus, end of year	31,252	30,841

Note: the VWHC's 2002 and 2003 reviews were conducted by
Certified General Accountants, Loren & Company.

Vancouver Women's Health Collective Information Centre

Offers all Women:

- health information line — information on health issues and resources available in your community
- information on our website
- women's health resource library
- health information files
- practitioner & therapist directory — from surgeons to naturopaths — includes evaluations completed by women who wish to share their experiences with other women, and questionnaires completed by practitioners & therapists about their services
- videos on women's health
- VWHC Menopause Kit in English and Chinese, for sale
- reusable cloth menstrual pads, for sale

Staffed predominantly by volunteers
please call the
Information Centre
for our hours of operation:
604-736-5262

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